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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2557

May 8, 1992

U.S. FARMERS, the most productive in the world, account for more than 20 million jobs and 16 percent of the Gross Domestic Product, Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** told the House Appropriations Subcommittee. Given a fair chance, "we can expand our markets, sell more products, and create more jobs," Madigan said. U.S. agriculture is in sound economic health and the outlook is "generally secure," Acting Assistant Secretary for Economics **Dan Sumner** told the subcommittee. Wheat and milk markets are much improved over earlier weaknesses; wheat prices are up sharply from this time a year ago; and corn prices are higher. **Contact: Roger Runningen (202) 720-4623.**

TRADE OFFICE IN OSAKA -- USDA has opened a new U.S. ag trade office in Osaka, Japan, to help U.S. exporters tap into the growing Japanese market, Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** says. "Although Japan is American agriculture's biggest overseas market," Madigan says, "Accounting for nearly a fourth of total agricultural and forestry exports, the potential for even bigger export sales is enormous." The U.S. sold \$7.7 billion of ag goods to Japan in fiscal year 1991, placing it first in ag exports. Canada was second at \$4.6 billion. **Contact: Sally Klusaritz (202) 720-3448.**

DAIRY PRICES SPRING UPWARD -- Wholesale prices of nonfat dry milk and cheese rose in March and April, the fourth straight year the increases began before the seasonal production peak. Skim milk markets were tight in early 1992, as commercial use of skim solids grew from a year earlier and milk production was about unchanged. **Contact: Jim Miller or Sara Short (202) 219-0769.**

RICE GROWERS TO PLANT MORE -- Rice farmers indicated in early March they intended to plant 3 million acres to rice in 1992 -- up 5 percent from 1991. Part of the 1992 acreage increase reflects 1991's weather-related problems and part is producers responding to the decrease in the ARP from 5 percent to zero. **Contact: Janet Livezey (202) 219-0840.**

WEIGHT LOSS MAY STRESS BONES -- Obese women lose bone mass as they lose weight, and this may increase their risk of osteoporosis, says **Henry C. Lukaski**, a USDA physiologist. Lukaski says a group of 14 obese women in their 20's and 30's lost an average 3 to 4 percent of their bone mass during a five-month controlled weight-loss study. The loss occurred even though the women's diets were adequate in all vitamins and minerals. Lukaski says the study was the first to look at the consequences of weight loss on bone. **Contact: Henry C. Lukaski (701) 795-8429.**

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HOW TO GET INFORMATION -- The latest edition of "How to Get Information from the United States Department of Agriculture" is off press. In addition to frequently used USDA phone numbers, it includes USDA Public Affairs and Agency Information Offices phone numbers; an index of USDA agencies; a USDA organizational chart; a USDA information staff index and a USDA subject index. For a copy, contact: **Marci Hilt** (202) 720-4330. **Media Only, please.**

INSPECTION REVIEW -- Secretary of Agriculture **Edward Madigan** has ordered federal investigators to conduct a food safety review at five meat packing firms following a broadcast on ABC's "Prime Time Live" that raised questions about beef inspection procedures at the plants. "I am deeply concerned" that allegations of beef contaminated by dirt, hair, shotgun pellets and other foreign matter could undermine public confidence in food safety, Madigan said. **Contact: Roger Runnigen** (202) 720-4623.

EXTENSION VOLUNTEERS -- Community service volunteers are an integral part of the Cooperative Extension System -- a partnership between USDA, the 74 land-grant universities and county governments. Extension volunteers -- 3 million of them -- are in every state and county, and in many local neighborhoods across the nation. Every day they give their time, energy and talent. **Contact: Charles Morgan** (202) 720-3401.

CROATIA AND SLOVENIA, newly-independent countries both formerly in the Yugoslavia federation, can now export meat products to the United States. **H. Russell Cross**, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, said this USDA action "will not have a significant impact on the economy, increase costs to U.S. consumers or adversely affect U.S. competition." By law, all countries eligible to export meat to the United States must have inspection standards at least equal to U.S. standards. **Contact: Jim Greene** (202) 720-0314.

USDA REFUNDS \$23 MILLION -- USDA has refunded \$23 million to milk producers who reduced 1991 milk marketings, says **Keith Bjerke**, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation. Any producer who did not market more milk in 1991 than in 1990 was eligible for a refund of the 5 cents per hundredweight assessment. **Contact: Bruce Merkle** (202) 720-8206.

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FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1822 -- On this edition of **Agriculture USA**, Gary Crawford takes a look at the use of animals in medical and psychological research from all sides of the issue -- from scientist to animal rights advocates. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1304 -- Animals in labs; farm on; vitamin D in milk; whole wheat for health; athletes and nutrition. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1813 -- USDA News Highlights; dairy refunds; low-tech farming; western water outlook; ethanol uncertainties. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1519 -- A deadly mix; weevil-specific control; nutrient-rich persimmons; new choice for southeast growers; low-fat steak cuts. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tues., May 19, weekly weather/crop, ag outlook, farm labor; Wed., May 20, wheat outlook; Thurs., May 21, catfish production, U.S. ag trade update; Fri., May 22, feed outlook, livestock and poultry outlook, cattle on feed. (These are the **USDA** reports we know about in advance. Our **Newsline** carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.)

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on integrated crop management, DeBoria Janifer reports on brucellosis eradication, Mike Thomas reports on a new program to teach kids the fundamentals of science and Dave Luciani reports on container gardening.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA meteorologist Norton Strommen on the latest weather and crop developments; Federal Grain Inspection Service Administrator John Foltz on a new commercial inspection service; and USDA hydrologist Jon Werner on the western water supply outlook.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary has a three-part series on tourism and the national forests; DeBoria Janifer reports on turfgrass research and Lynn Wyvill reports on the rice outlook.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update, five minutes of USDA farm program information in "news desk" format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:45 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:45 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

MOSCOW AND ST. PETERSBURG...were on the itinerary of **Ed Slusarczyk** and **Jeff Stewart** (Ag Radio Network, Utica, N.Y.). They spent two weeks visiting several areas of the former Soviet Union, and filed reports from farms that have been shifted from collective to private operation. Their broadcasts emphasized how U.S. farmers will find new markets in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

WHEAT CROP...in Kentucky is in much better shape this year. **Allen Aldridge** (Kentucky Agrinet, Louisville) says much of the crop was plowed under last year due to disease. He says disease occurrence seems lower this year. New voice on the network is a familiar one to farmers and the agribusiness community. **Jack Crowner** joined the network May 4.

SIXTH YEAR OF DROUGHT...is taking its toll, says **Kelly Klaas** (KEZJ, Twin Falls, Idaho). Kelly says the region's light snow pack melted early. Reduced water supplies have forced several 400 acre farms to plant only 60 acres.

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Office of Public Affairs
Radio-TV Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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OUR AUDIENCE IS IN THE FIELDS...says **Mike Adams** (WLDS, Jacksonville, Ill.) getting in corn and soybeans. Mike says those producers who took a risk and planted during the warm days of February have corn that survived the cold snaps in March. It is up and looking good. They could benefit from an early harvest. Interest in ethanol runs high in his listening area. Mike is keeping listeners informed about a proposal in the state legislature mandating ethanol use in state vehicles.

FARMERS AS ENVIRONMENTALISTS...was the title of a recent program broadcast by **Tom Riter** (KFKA, Greeley, Colo.). Tom interviewed a number of experts regarding the recycling of agricultural byproducts. An example cited is the recycling of sugar beet pulp into animal feed. Tom says it saves beet producers \$2 million in disposal costs and benefits cattle producers as a feed ingredient.

VIC POWELL

Chief, Radio and TV Division